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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Federation for Family Development, International Federation for Home Economics, International Inner Wheel, International Kolping Society, Soroptimist International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

There is a persistence of poverty situations, in spite of commitments and programmes of action to eradicate poverty, at both national and international levels. The distance existing between respective administrations and the social reality of hunger and malnutrition could point to a possible cause for the lack of solutions and the resultant persistence.

Widespread poverty particularly affects developing countries. Deficient or non-existent infrastructure services, injustice and corruption can create social dysfunction, which can be further exacerbated by natural disasters, such as drought, as well as by armed conflicts, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which can wipe out vast population areas in numerous countries.

The eradication of poverty requires universal access to basic social services such as education, health care, safe water supply and sanitation measures.

Poverty, however, is also part of the social structure of several developed countries, that "fourth world" that arises unexpectedly before our eyes.

The considerable distance between the dehumanizing situation of poverty and a remote administrative system calls for interceding agencies, and there is no more effective go-between than the family; the safety net where the basic needs are met, even in crisis situations, such as poverty, unemployment, delinquency, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS. Children, youth, the disabled and elderly members all benefit from a readily available network, such as the family, concurrent to State infrastructures.

All over the world, families are as different as they are alike. Families are essential to the world's future, and are the cradle of generations to come. Everywhere the strengths and weaknesses of families reflect the fabric of society. As the world's basic human relationship, the family has survived thousands of years, adapting to changing socio-economic conditions and the progress of humanity.

Greater attention should hence be focused on families and on promoting awareness of the contribution made by families the world over.

A family dimension should therefore also be implicit in all policies and documents related to poverty.

* Issued without formal editing.

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